Advanced Training Course

THE CHINESE INTELLIGENCE THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY:

GOALS, TARGETS, AND TACTICS OF ESPIONAGE AND HYBRID WARFARE

PROF. NICHOLAS EFTIMIADES



Rome, December 12, 2026
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM CET
Una Hotels Empire Roma
Via Aureliana , 39

IN-PERSON AND LIVE-STREAMED
Language: English only

ISTITUTO GINO GERMANI
DI SCIENZE SOCIALI E STUDI STRATEGICI

SCUOLA DI FORMAZIONE IN INTELLIGENCE E ANALISI STRATEGICA

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Advanced Training Course

THE CHINESE INTELLIGENCE THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY:

GOALS, TARGETS, AND TACTICS OF ESPIONAGE AND HYBRID WARFARE

Saturday, December 12 (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM)
UNAHOTELS Empire Roma
Via Aureliana, 39
00187 Rome

The Gino Germani Institute of Social Sciences and Strategic Studies, within the framework of its School of Training in Intelligence and Strategic Analysis, has organized a one-day advanced training course *"The Chinese Intelligence Threat to National Security: Objectives, Targets, and Tactics of Espionage and Hybrid Warfare,"* to be held on Saturday, December 12, 2026, at UNAHOTELS Empire Roma (Via Aureliana, 39 - 00187 Rome), both in person and via live streaming. The course will be conducted in English.

THE COURSE

The intelligence services of the People's Republic of China (PRC)—among the most aggressive in the world in economic, political, military, and scientific espionage, as well as hybrid and cognitive warfare—pose a growing threat to the national security of democratic states, including Italy.

It is therefore essential to foster an in-depth understanding of this threat among civil and military institutions, businesses, the political sphere, academia and scientific research centers, and the media— all of which are sensitive sectors of the Italian system that are primary targets of Chinese intelligence operations.

This course—taught by Nicholas Eftimiades, former senior official in the U.S. Intelligence Community and one of the world's leading experts on Chinese intelligence, with the contribution of Roberto Toncig, former senior official of AISE (Italian External Intelligence and Security Agency)—aims to address this need, helping to bridge a critical training gap in the Italian intelligence education landscape.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND TOPICS OF ANALYSIS

The course will enable participants to gain a deeper understanding of the national security threat posed by the intelligence agencies of the People's Republic of China, with a strong focus on Beijing's evolving espionage tactics and techniques, as well as hybrid and cognitive warfare operations.

The **first session** of the day will be dedicated to an analysis of the Chinese intelligence system and its distinctive "whole-of-society" approach. It will examine the actors that make up this system, along with their assigned intelligence tasks and targets:

- **"Official/Traditional" Actors:** Ministry of State Security (MSS); Ministry of Public Security (MPS); Intelligence Bureau of the Central Military Commission (CMC); Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission (CMC).

- **"Non-Traditional" Actors:** Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs); Chinese Communist Party (CCP) organizations (United Front Work Department); universities and research institutes; private companies.

The **second session** will explore the tactics and operational tradecraft used by Chinese intelligence agencies to spot, target, recruit, and handle civilian government, military, law enforcement, and intelligence personnel in Western countries. Case-studies of Chinese espionage against Western military and political-institutional targets will be presented.

The **third session** will focus on Chinese intelligence techniques and operational tradecraft in the field of economic and scientific-technological espionage, featuring case-study discussions. Topics will include HUMINT espionage tactics targeting Western companies, the theft of sensitive technologies through illicit technology export operations, and the exfiltration of valuable know-how and intellectual property from academic institutions and research centers.

The **fourth and final session** will examine the hybrid and cognitive warfare strategy and operations conducted by the People's Republic of China against democratic states, as well as the Chinese intelligence actors responsible for these operations. The analysis will focus on various types of hybrid and cognitive operations, including:

- Covert influence operations targeting national and local governments, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- Manipulation of national public opinion through traditional media and artificial intelligence (AI) to fuel internal tensions and divisions within democratic societies.

- Exploitation of the Chinese diaspora and Chinese organized crime in Western countries as instruments of covert influence operations and intelligence collection.

- Tactics and technique used to recruit PRC agents of influence among Western politicians and members of the Chinese diaspora.

- Sabotage operations targeting critical infrastructure.

COURSE AGENDA

Saturday, 12 December 2026

- **8:30 AM:** Registration of participants

- **9:00 AM – 9:50 AM:**
  - The Intelligence System of the People's Republic of China and "Traditional" vs. "Non-Traditional" Espionage Actors
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- **9:50 AM – 10:10 AM:**
  - Q&A Session (Q&A sessions are moderated by Roberto Toncig)

- **10:10 AM – 10:30 AM:**
  - Coffee Break

- **10:30 AM – 11:50 AM:**
  - Operational Methodologies and Tradecraft of Chinese Intelligence for Spotting, Targeting, Recruiting, and Handling Civilian Government and Military Personnel in Western Countries

- **11:50 AM – 12:10 PM:**
  - Q&A Session

- **12:10 PM – 1:00 PM**
  - Operational Methodologies and Tradecraft of Chinese Intelligence in Economic and Scientific-Technological Espionage Against Western Companies and Research Centers

- **1:00 PM – 2:30 PM:** Lunch Break

- **2:30 PM – 2:50 PM:**
  - Q&A Session

- **2:50 PM – 4:20 PM:**
  - Hybrid and Cognitive Warfare Strategy and Operations of the People's Republic of China Against Western States

- **4:20 PM – 4:40 PM:**
  - Q&A Session

- **4:40 PM – 5:00 PM:**
  - Policy Recommendations for Institutions and Businesses. Conclusions
  - Awarding of Certificates

FACULTY

Nicholas Eftimiades is a Professor of Homeland Security at Penn State University. One of the world's foremost experts on Chinese intelligence, Eftimiades is the author of the seminal work *Chinese Intelligence Operations*, which he updated in January 2025 with the volume *Chinese Espionage Operations and Tactics*. He had a distinguished 34-year career in the U.S. government and Intelligence Community, holding operational, analytical, investigative, and leadership roles at the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the Department of State.

Roberto Toncig (Subject Matter Expert, former Senior Official of AISE) will moderate the Q&A sessions.

CERTIFICATE AND FINAL EVALUATION

At the end of the course, participants will receive a Certificate of Participation. Enrollees who wish to receive a final evaluation may submit a short paper on a topic covered during the course, in the form of an analysis or in-depth study.

The Final Evaluation Certificate may be submitted by the participant to their respective Administration to request official entry into their service record (*trascrizione a matricola*). This certificate also allows students to apply for University Training Credits (ECTS/CFU) at their home university. Each university independently determines the recognition of credits attributable to training courses attended by students. Papers deemed of particular interest by the Scientific Committee may, in agreement with the author, be published on the Germani Institute's website and media channels.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Personnel from defense, security, diplomatic and law enforcement institutions.
- Personnel from all national and local government administrations.

- Corporate security managers, experts in corporate security, risk management, business intelligence, and private intelligence.
- Corporate personnel, with particular reference to critical infrastructure and national strategic industries.
- Personnel from scientific research institutes.
- Experts from universities, think tanks, and the private sector specializing in national and international security issues.
- Policymakers and their staff.
- Mass media professionals, press officers for public administrations, corporations, and non-governmental organizations.
- Experts in strategic consulting, public relations, and communications.
- Recent graduates, students, and professionals interested in deepening their knowledge of the intelligence world and national security issues.

TUITION FEE

Course fee: €150 + VAT: **€183**

A 10% discount is available for members of National Security agencies, Police Forces, Armed Forces, and university students. A non-cumulative 10% discount is also available for those who have previously attended our courses.

Course fee with 10% discount (VAT included): €164.70

For further information, please contact:

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